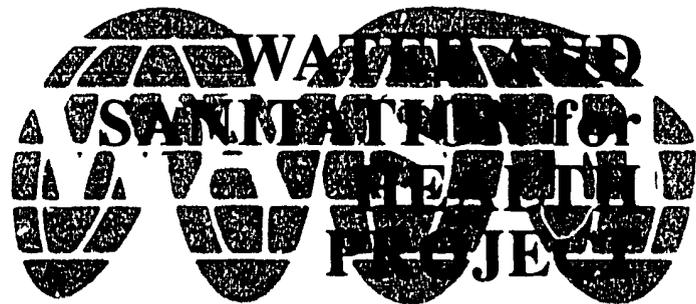


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INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT: PROCESSES FOR SCALING UP

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March 1992



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INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT: PROCESSES FOR SCALING UP

Prepared for the Office of Health,
Bureau for Research and Development
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by

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and
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ACRONYMS

KfW	<i>Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau</i>
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
O&M	Operation and maintenance
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WASH	Water and Sanitation for Health Project
WS&S	Water supply and sanitation

PREFACE

Because the distinction between community participation and community management is not always clear, a brief discussion of the two may be useful before proceeding.

At the beginning of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, community participation was generally defined as the labor that community members provided during the construction of water supply and sanitation systems. This narrowly defined role, which placed participation within a largely technical perspective, aided coverage but did little to foster a sense of ownership, without which few communities developed the willingness or the ability to maintain their new systems. When this developmental gap was recognized later in the Decade, the concept of community participation expanded to include beneficiary participation in the planning and design of projects and also in their direction, execution, and management. How well the community carries out these latter functions ultimately determines whether their system achieves sustainability or falls into disrepair.

Operations and maintenance skills, organizing techniques, self-confidence, effective communication—all come into play when community members participate in the various phases of their project. And it is those skills and attitudes that lead them to community management, a vital element of the community participation process. Thus, community management within this context encompasses the management activities that community members undertake as a result of the skills they develop through their participation in a water supply and sanitation project, skills that allow the community to sustain its water supply system and to undertake further development efforts. Indeed, the expanded concept of community participation includes management, the focus of this paper. It is the management aspect that requires the mobilization of resources not only from and by communities, but from central and national institutions interested and responsible for decentralization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of sustainability of water and sanitation projects has emphasized different areas at different times. Initially, the focus of the sector was strictly technical and focused on engineering. At another point, the emphasis was seen as primarily an institutional question. More recently, the spotlight has fallen on community management, raising questions about the level of support that communities must have if they are to use the new facilities and to operate and maintain them effectively.

Many donor activities in recent years have emphasized communities' need to plan and sustain their own development efforts. There have also been many millions spent on strengthening governmental organizations and agencies at various levels. Rarely has the connection been made about government's role in supporting community management, delineating the steps to take to prepare middle levels of government to support communities' efforts. This report attempts to bridge these two themes—institutional development (or strengthening) and community management.

In order for community management to work, the middle or intermediate levels working directly with communities must be strengthened so they can provide the communities with the capacity to manage their own water systems. Within the context of community management, *decentralization* is defined as the delegation of decision making to this intermediate level of government, and countries will vary in the degree of decision making delegated.

Efforts to decentralize national water and sanitation programs are directly tied to organizational structure of those programs. The success or failure of such efforts will depend on whether a country's water and sanitation sector is structured in a way that is conducive to community management. In a highly centralized sector where a national agency delivers services, sector policymakers and managers are rarely responsive to communities. Decentralization, along with community management, calls for national or regional agencies to devote time and resources to developing a local capacity which can strengthen community structures.

National and central institutions are beginning to recognize that for community management to achieve its promise, long-term nurturing and support will be needed. Water supply and sanitation systems have costs and responsibilities that must be met, whether the systems are operated by local or central authorities. Needs relating to staff training and retraining, fuel availability, spare parts, and more complex operations and maintenance all require the action of both central authorities and communities. These and many more issues are signalling to authorities the gaps in their support for community management and also their need to recognize that the concept of decentralization encompasses more than the shifting of central government responsibilities to subnational units or communities.

In making its case for such support, this document draws upon experiences of the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project in carrying out the process of institutionalization of community management. A synthesis of these field experiences reveals greatly increased growth and development of the water supply and sanitation sector through a scaling-up process that has begun to move individual projects into government programs and enlarge the focus from discrete microprojects to a national strategy.

The process of scaling up is central to institutionalization. Development activities, which frequently focus on discrete projects, tend to isolate resources and concentrate activities on one region. Following successful pilot projects, it is often assumed that the same process used in the implementation of a project in one area can be replicated in other areas, thus covering the entire country and thereby "institutionalizing" the activities. In practice this has rarely been the case. This document looks at what type of planning activities and resource allocations should be undertaken by central and national governments to ensure that the local maintenance and management are supported and sustained. Written from the perspective of national/central government planners, this document describes the steps governments should take to promote and support large-scale community management and outlines the issues and processes encountered in scaling up from microprojects to national-level programs.

Chapter 2 examines some of the basic contextual factors that influence the form and format of community management in various countries. The chapter opens with the premise that community management may not work in the same way everywhere, as the form it takes is influenced by a variety of factors:

- **Availability of water.** Communities that enjoy ready access to enough water to meet their needs (although not necessarily from a safe source) are generally reluctant to participate in community management responsibilities.
- **Economic and financial issues.** It is sometimes assumed that because the service level is minimal, communities (especially rural and peri-urban) will be able to sustain them. However, time spent in managing a community water supply displaces time spent for other survival activities.
- **Political context.** Frequently, donor support and the interests of the national ministry are closely linked to politics, both national and international.
- **Sociocultural issues.** The lack of systematic approaches to understanding existing management systems and existing hygiene behaviors tends to lead to solutions that are neither based on reality nor sustainable. When government institutions are determining

priorities that affect specific communities, those priorities need to be planned around data relating to the residents of those communities and to the hygiene and management contexts within which they operate.

- **Institutional issues.** The delivery of water and sanitation programs to communities calls for a range of tasks from institutions in the water and sanitation sector. These tasks require a variety of skills, which the institutions must outline and arrange as a part of the scaling-up process.

The third chapter, dealing with sectoral arrangements for community management, examines the overall context in which community management takes place and discusses the types of institutional arrangements that would support community management.

The fourth chapter outlines the operational steps needed to institutionalize community management. The chapter builds on the issues raised in Chapter 3 and discusses recommendations in several areas:

- **Encouraging donor collaboration.** Lack of donor collaboration is one of the stumbling blocks to scaling up of community management. When one donor promotes capacity-building and community management and another stresses the number of systems built to meet coverage figures, the government is less likely to develop the policies and structures necessary to institutionalize community management. Leverage must be used to achieve this collaboration among donors and ensure that they do not promote policies that are at odds with one another.
- **Establishing a legal and policy framework.** Community management needs a supportive legal and policy framework that encompasses operations and maintenance responsibilities, legal status of community water users associations, ownership of physical assets, community responsibility for asset management, and regulatory provisions to ensure that communities carry out their responsibilities.
- **Defining and clarifying key functions.** Community management in water supply and sanitation calls for the integration of a number of components.
 - **Operations and maintenance.** Because communities cannot perform all operations and maintenance functions, projects with a community management focus must know what the

community can do, who can do it, and what training is needed. The role of the government is to ensure that training, tools, and spare parts are available and conveniently located.

- **Health and hygiene.** Although ministries of public health are viewed as the most logical group to implement this component, they are often weaker ministries with smaller budgets and staff than the ministries responsible for infrastructure construction.
- **Monitoring and support.** Support from a regional staff is needed to provide continued training based on the needs identified at the community level by the extension agents. Monitoring and support must be centered on the community and extension services.
- **Managing finances and cost recovery.** Generally, community water supply and sanitation projects anticipate that at a minimum communities can pay for operations and maintenance costs, although the differing types of systems and associated costs are not always discussed in sufficient detail. The national government should develop a simple financial management system that community people can understand and manage themselves and that allows the government to monitor funds.
- **Determining staffing and organizational needs.** Despite the fact that support for community management is a labor-intensive process, the economic situation of most countries is such that many governments are under pressure to keep people off the public payroll. To address this problem, some technical institutions have retrained staff to work as extension staff, the most needed category in the process of community management.
- **Determining training needs.** Training is one of the critical steps in institutionalizing community management. Developing a national capacity and a delivery system to conduct effective training is clearly one of the appropriate roles of the central government.
- **Determining logistical support needs.** Although donors have curtailed the provision of logistical support, outreach to communities—frequently done outside prescribed office hours—remains a basic need. Who will provide logistical support and how it will be provided will need to be outlined.

- **Creating awareness and demand for community management.** The issue of community management needs to be kept alive beyond the project time. A sector that is involved in the institutionalization of community management needs to develop appropriate social marketing strategies, among both community people and decision makers.
- **Developing a management information system.** In order to monitor progress of a national community management system, both district and national offices need to track programs.
- **Documenting a process for working with communities.** The authors outline methodologies for documenting the reasons for certain actions and the results of those actions.

The concluding section stresses that community management needs to expand beyond capacity-building activities with community people, alone, to include all the government and national decision makers who provide support over the longer term.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Few donors or implementing agencies would deny the importance of community management and hygiene education in rural and peri-urban water supply and sanitation (WS&S) efforts, for it is now generally agreed that without these components water projects will yield fewer health improvements and be less sustainable. Although much thought has gone into developing the concept of community management (Bamberger 1986), mounting evidence suggests that there is still more to be learned.

Some developing countries have made community management a part of their decentralization plans, transferring responsibility for rural system management to the users. Various donors support this trend, suggesting that a community's responsibility for the improved facilities goes hand in hand with its sense of ownership for the systems (Donnelly-Roark 1987, McCommon et al. 1990, IRC 1988). Responsibility and ownership, however, are closely tied to training and capacity-building, all of which require support from institutions with more resources than communities can command. Increasingly, central and national WS&S institutions recognize these needs and recognize, too, that community management encompasses far more than the central government's transferring of responsibilities to subnational (or regional) units and communities. Indeed, community management may falter or even fail completely unless the central government provides enough support both during and after the transfer. Looking at the two ends of the spectrum, community management efforts at one end and the institutions needed to support them at the other, it is clear that their interconnectedness is not always understood.

1.2 Scope of the Document

This document makes use of a broad cross section of WS&S experiences worldwide to outline the critical issues in the institutionalization of community management. Some of these experiences involve the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) Project, which is aiding several countries in their efforts to institutionalize community management. One such effort is a USAID-funded rural water project in the governorate of Kasserine in Tunisia. In each village receiving a water system, the project set up water users associations, which have worked so successfully that the Tunisian government has committed itself to replicating this community management concept throughout the country. WASH is providing technical assistance to the government in this transition to ensure that the associations are well prepared and adequately supported by central authorities. Similar WASH assistance in institutional

development at both central and community levels is currently taking place in Belize and Ecuador.

A synthesis of these field experiences is revealing because of the overall picture that emerges: greatly increased growth and development of the sector through a scaling-up process that has begun to move individual projects into government programs and enlarge the focus from discrete projects to a national strategy. This document focuses on the issues and steps involved in developing a large-scale community management program. Written from the perspective of the central government, the report outlines the steps necessary to promote and support community management on a large scale.

Specifically, the document will focus on the following objectives:

1. Identify the larger environmental context needed to support community management, which will include various levels of government and possibly the private sector.
2. Identify the institutional gaps in supporting community management.
3. Outline the operational steps necessary for institutionalizing community management.

Intended primarily for government agencies responsible for rural water supply and sanitation, this document will serve as a tool in the formulation of strategies and action plans to help support the institutionalization of community-based programs. Its chapters outline the issues and processes such agencies will encounter as they scale up from microprojects to national-level programs.

Chapter 2

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Community management does not occur in a vacuum. Thus, an understanding of the overall context in which community management occurs is critical to developing appropriate strategies for a large-scale effort. This chapter will explore the key contextual issues that form the backdrop to the establishment of a national community management program.

An important starting point is the realization that community management is not always the most appropriate approach to system sustainability, nor does it work in all cases (Gilbert 1987). Although the involvement of people in their own affairs is an important consideration and one that must be reinforced in the programming of WS&S projects, community management may have limited effectiveness for a variety of reasons. For one thing, poor people rarely trust their governments. When participation at the local level fails, it is sometimes because people mistrust the government and may ignore the requests (or demands) of project representatives. To the poor, whether villagers or peri-urban residents, project staff may appear to be representatives of the government (Moser 1989). Not only the nature of the government but also the composition of that society determine the form, content, and level of local participation; the trick is to view the benefits of participation through the eyes of the community. Often, however, agreement and support for participation are solicited only from donor and government perspectives.

2.1 Water Availability

The availability of water affects the amount of time and interest that communities are willing to invest (Uphoff 1990). Water scarcity is, of course, a matter of degree; however, experience from the water sector suggests that where there is significant water scarcity, the benefits to community members from participating in some kind of group decision-making and management will be high. In fact, structures for managing this meager resource may already be in place. It is likely that over the years a local water management system has evolved that is as effective as possible, given the circumstances. Examples of community management exist in oases in desert countries, where by necessity communities have developed associations to manage a precious resources.

At the other extreme, communities having an abundance of water will generally have little interest in investing time to build decision-making processes. A more effective approach might be to emphasize the importance of having a safe water supply instead of getting unsafe water from traditional sources. Such communities might develop a stronger environmental sanitation program as a result (Yacoob et al. 1989, Roark et al. 1988).

In the middle range of "relative scarcity," community members are likely to find it worthwhile to involve themselves in resource mobilization and capacity-building activities so as to have a voice in decision-making that benefits them (Yacoob 1989, Roark and Smucker 1987).

2.2 Economic and Financial Issues

The macroeconomic context within which community management takes place is also very important. The best community management processes and projects can fail if the exchange rate is so overvalued that there is no gasoline to run the pump. Although the sustainability of community WS&S projects depends to a large degree on community resources and skills, these cannot be separated from the macropolicies. A sound macroeconomic framework is a precondition for the success of projects that depend on inputs beyond the ability of communities to provide (Bossert 1990).

If a country has severe budget limitations and simply cannot financially support the recurrent costs of operating and maintaining water systems, the community will need to assume a major share of the costs. Most governments in developing countries do not have excess funds and are moving toward a policy of community management primarily for economic reasons. In addition, governments will be able to provide better service and extend coverage if they are not responsible for all operations and maintenance (O&M) costs.

During the late 1980s, the debt crisis of the developing nations in combination with shrinking donor resources made it absolutely clear that the provision of no-cost WS&S facilities to all the world's people was no longer a realistic option. On the heels of this realization came the present-day emphasis on community provision of O&M costs. Economic considerations aside, the question of sustainability now became the focal point in the conceptual paradigm of community WS&S projects.

A review of projects that have failed despite a strong community-participation focus suggests that one cause may be a failure to appreciate the time cost to communities. When assessing the practicality of community management, two tasks need close attention: delineating at the outset of the project the full economic costs associated with community management and examining the cost saving of managing resources at the community rather than at the central government level. Gains must offset costs if long-term community management is to succeed (Yacoob and Walker 1991).

In reviewing issues of sustainability of improved facilities in a peri-urban area, one project manager suggested that community participation was impossible because residents were busy with other activities and could not find time to come together for meetings. Community management takes the time of busy people whose schedule of activities is not of a leisurely nature. Planners tend to assume that because poor peri-urban dwellers or villagers receive no money for their numerous activities, these activities are therefore of little value. However, time

spent in managing a community water or sanitation system displaces time that could have been spent in other activities. (This is referred to as the "opportunity cost.") Systems may fail because the resources required to sustain them are too great for the community to provide. No matter how minimal the level of service, the costs to the community may still be too high to be sustained even by the combined efforts of the community and the central authority (Yacoob and Walker 1991).

Ownership and responsibility are the key ingredients for sustainability of such projects. The willingness to properly use, operate, and maintain the system is considered the most overt manifestation of a sense of ownership. However, the question of ownership goes beyond the right to manage the system. Most governments are reluctant to adopt policies granting the physical system to the community association. Yet how can community members truly feel they own the system if they are being loaned the physical assets and asked to manage them? Clearly, this policy-oriented issue needs to be defined by the national government.

The concept of "willingness to pay" has begun to emerge as a pivotal point in determining whether a system will be both sustainable and replicable. One methodology for determining such willingness is based on surveys in which a member of a household is asked a series of structured questions designed to discover the maximum amount of money a household is willing to pay for improved water facilities (Whittington 1988).

Studies may or may not be accurate predictors of future behavior, however, since they are often limited by the fact that they ask users to respond to a hypothetical situation. Social and behavioral sciences have demonstrated that actual human behavior is often quite different from what responses to hypothetical questions might indicate; people do not always do what they say they will do. There is some question whether people will actually spend the amount of money they say they will spend according to willingness-to-pay studies, even for as highly valued a good as water. It is also unclear what relationship exists between willingness to pay and ability to pay, and whether willingness to pay is affected by availability of time or shrinking household incomes. The studies appear to be most useful when actual behavior (e.g., the amount the household is now paying a vendor for water) rather than hypothetical behavior is measured (Whittington et al. 1989).

Despite their limitations, willingness-to-pay studies are now an integral part of project planning, and the data they produce are sometimes used as an indicator of community interest and preference for levels of technology. Such studies are now used, also, as a technique for assessing the potential for cost recovery.

But ownership implies more than monetary payment. For community WS&S projects, it also implies skill development, a time cost that community members will have to bear. It is simplistic to assume that the degree of community ownership is a function of the degree of cost recovery, which in turn is a function of O&M effectiveness, or that where there is complete cost recovery, communities are able to manage systems and, consequently, systems

are sustainable. In evaluating the utility of cost recovery in community management, it is the contribution of this element to sustainability and capacity-building that is most relevant.

2.3 Political Context

Across the board the provision of water tends to be a political issue. The primary areas around which political decisions seem to dominate are, first, in the selection and provision of technologies. National governments view policies regarding the type of systems provided as a question of modernization. For example, systems operated on imported gasoline or on electricity costing \$.20 per kilowatt are provided only to certain communities. The second political issue, related to the first, is when governments play donors against each other. It is not uncommon that when one donor withdraws support because national policies or technology choice are not appropriate, other donors are often willing to spend their resources. Finally, the selection of communities or districts for improved water systems tends to favor those where political rewards to policymakers are greatest. In fact, it is not uncommon to find that some poorer and less influential communities may receive lower level technology, e.g., hand-dug wells or pumps, when other communities receive systems run by electricity or diesel power.

It is not unusual to find that in countries where community management and decentralization are feared by the national government, donor and project staff do not include these elements in their operations. Or if they do, some national governments respond by accepting the role of communities in the design but failing to provide resources to support their participation.

Another important political factor is the degree of support that community management receives from the various political levels. Political will and commitment to the involvement of communities in their own development is crucial to successful community management. Some governments give lip service to such commitment but provide no resources to back up their words. Support from political officials is perhaps the most important factor in a successful community management program. If the politicians do not support community management, they can easily undermine it.

2.4 Sociocultural Issues

Prior to determining the type of support needed for community management, an institution will need first of all to clearly define its mission. Why is water being provided? Is it to improve community health status or to improve economic conditions? Each answer will require a different community-level emphasis and, possibly, organization. Following such a decision, basic information is needed to determine the most appropriate structures and types of interventions.

The basic information necessary includes the following types of questions:

- How are community resources managed? What types of structures and organizations are used to manage existing water sources or community religious places?
- What are the household economic activities? How much time is spent for the different household tasks, and by whom?
- How do people survive in times of extreme water shortages?
- How do men and women interact economically within a household? How do women acquire their wealth, and what are their financial and labor responsibilities? How do these differ from those of the men?
- How are decisions made within the household and within the community?
- What are the hygiene behaviors contributing to major community diseases, and what do community people see as the cause of these diseases?

Many of the errors most frequently blamed for lack of program sustainability are attributed to inappropriate diagnosis of the problem and overoptimism of the solutions. Donor inability to move from small experiential projects to the national scale can be attributed to insufficient time taken in establishing the processes leading to success. The brief community visits of consulting teams or resident government officials tend primarily to confirm interpretations or reaffirm conclusions from either earlier or similar contexts rather than calling for a re-examining of current realities and using the data to formulate approaches and strategies.

The lack of systematic approaches to understanding existing management systems and existing hygiene behaviors tends to lead to approaches that have been most appropriately classified by Chambers (1978) as leading to the following biases: "tarmac bias, showcase village bias, over-representation of areas next to research stations and towns, progressive farmer bias, rich farmer bias, male farmer bias."

Community data upon which institutions base their programs and support suffer from the above-mentioned biases. One way to overcome this basic flaw is to structure small teams (that also include government staff) to collect field data, allowing at least three to four weeks of field work for each team to observe what is going on in a representative sample of communities. Following such field experience, government staff can begin to formulate the most relevant approaches to the context.

Yet another aspect with which most government institutions are out of touch with communities, and thus unable to provide appropriate support, stems from governmental emphasis on meeting coverage goals in both latrine and water system construction. Experience indicates that sustainability is more often gained from slower approaches and better understanding of what is feasible and possible for communities to use, support, and maintain. Assessing the capacity of communities to take on increased responsibility for managing their water system is important.

Government institutions tend to base their primary rationale for community management on cost/benefit analysis, reasoning that community people will benefit from increased water and from reductions of diseases stemming from poor sanitation practices. Experience suggests that high financial return to the government may provide too little motivation for households and communities to accept new technologies.

Thus, when government institutions are determining priorities, the priorities of community people within this framework must also play a role, ensuring by this type of consideration and approach that the support provided is appropriate and relevant. The institutions benefit, as well, since their efforts in providing support are not frustrated by community people who misuse the facilities and fail to provide the required maintenance.

2.5 Institutional Issues

Delivery of water and sanitation programs to communities requires that institutions in the water and sanitation sector possess a variety of skills, including community development, operations and maintenance, hygiene education, training, management, engineering, and financial management. These skill areas are not exclusive to central government. The central and regional levels of government each have an important role to play in a national community management program.

Apart from the variety of skill areas needed for institutionalizing community management is the issue of physical and social distance of government staff from the community being served. This distance frequently means that institutional staff have very little knowledge of community beliefs, priorities, and needs. It is not unusual to hear extension agents express perceptions of villagers as ignorant people, people who are illiterate and, therefore, must be shown what to do. Unfortunately, the process of institutionalizing community management, which requires skills of facilitation rather than teaching, provides few rewards for the extension agents. Unlike the physical construction of the facilities, which can be seen, counted, and structurally evaluated, the processes of community management are rarely clearly defined or visibly evident.

Communities themselves may contribute to this problem. It is not unusual to see community people pay great respect and esteem to those carrying out the construction or drilling of the

Improved facilities, even to the point of providing food and lodging. By contrast, the extension workers providing community management training are frequently seen as less important; for the extension agents, there is little incentive to spend much time in communities where they may even have to negotiate their meal for the day.

In such situations of low demand from communities and little accountability required of extension agents by the institutions responsible for community management, there is clearly a need for incentives. These need not be monetary, but they do need to be identified. A World Bank study reviewing seven community water projects in West Africa found that such incentives are very important (Sara and Grey 1990). They may include such things as holding extension agents accountable for and having incentives for conducting a certain number of meetings with community organizations and for defining the results of such meetings. Non-monetary types of incentives might include providing extension agents with supportive supervision and regularly scheduled problem-oriented training, and providing community organizations with training in the evaluation of their progress and assessments of their successful experiences.

The ministries providing the extension agents—home affairs, women's affairs, etc.—typically are government agencies and tend therefore to expect the government to provide all financing and support for an indefinite time. Such a perspective tends to slow down the processes of community self-reliance. As well, it is not unusual to find that those responsible for the selection, training, and supervision of field extension agents have gained their seniority not through expertise but through their length of service within the bureaucracy. Innovative methods to carry out WS&S projects focused on community management are more difficult to integrate within such a context.

Complications sometimes arise from the fact that water and sanitation projects are usually managed by engineers, who often have the ultimate responsibility for supervising extension agents. Frequently, engineers in such supervisory positions tend to believe in the overriding importance of their technical knowledge or underestimate the kind of support that communities need to become capable of managing their own water systems.

Staffing is also a serious institutional constraint in community management. Typically, government ministries have limited budgets and are not free to hire additional extension-level staff. Yet community management is a labor-intensive process and one that requires adequate staff with access to transportation.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are frequently selected to aid community management efforts because the bureaucratic considerations mentioned in this section are generally inapplicable to them. Although NGOs are often most successful at the community level, the sustainability of their efforts is constrained if governmental institutions responsible for community management are unavailable to provide the needed support.

Some NGO efforts toward institutionalizing community management are worth noting. In Haiti, for example, at a time of little government continuity or support, CARE trained a team of three people who were already government employees and helped get them placed within the national water authority responsible for rural water. One of them is available to work in community management and hygiene education, another in operations and maintenance, and a third in training. In another effort, CARE in Sierra Leone developed a "secretariat" for water supply and sanitation within the Ministry of Health. The members of that secretariat included CARE staff who continued to upgrade the skills of the extension agents from the government and from other donors in the country.

This chapter has spelled out issues and constraints that arise when attempts are made to institutionalize project components that are unrelated to physical construction. The operational implications require that special emphasis be placed on countering some of these trends. Chapter 3 discusses in detail the sectoral arrangements that *support* community management.

Chapter 3

SECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

A key issue in institutionalizing community management is whether a country's water and sanitation sector is structured in a way that is conducive to community management. Water and sanitation planners increasingly accept the premise that a highly centralized sector, in which a national agency is directly involved in service delivery, can rarely be responsive to communities or capable of developing a community capacity to operate and maintain a water system. What is required, instead, is a sector that has delegated the responsibility for service delivery to the provincial or district level and that has, as well, devoted time and resources to developing a capacity at that level to strengthen community structures.

This chapter will examine the overall sectoral context in which community management takes place and discuss the types of institutional arrangements that would support community management. The chapter will also set the stage for the more specific steps, described in Chapter 4, that a national agency might follow in fostering community management.

3.1 Decentralization

For community management to occur, central government agencies must make the fundamental decision to change their role from that of provider to regulator and promoter. As long as central government agencies retain the responsibility for financing, planning, design, construction, and even operation and maintenance, communities will continue to play a minor role in managing their water systems. However, as central governments change their role to one of regulator and promoter, they will turn increasingly to a variety of options for rural water supply: nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and community water boards. In all cases, the communities themselves will have a greatly increased role in decision-making.

The changing role of central government will inevitably lead to more decentralization. The organization of a water sector usually includes at least three levels: the national level, the provincial or state level, and the community level. In Tunisia, for example, the rural water supply sector consists of three levels. At the first level, the Ministry of Agriculture sets policy, arranges financing, allocates resources, and approves plans. At the second, provincial offices of the Ministry of Agriculture carry out regional planning, design and construction, and major system maintenance. Local community water users associations, at the third level, collect fees and carry out basic operations and maintenance.

In large countries there may be several intermediate levels of government, whereas in very small countries such as island nations, there may be none. In Indonesia, for example, there are four levels that include—in addition to national, district-level, and community offices—a

subdistrict office that stores and distributes frequently replaced spare parts. In order for community management to work, the middle or intermediate levels working directly with communities must be strengthened so they can provide the communities with the capacity to manage their own water systems. Within the context of community management, *decentralization* is defined as the delegation of decision-making to this intermediate level of government, and countries will vary in the degree of decision-making delegated. In some countries, for example, planning will continue to be done at the central level while only operational authority is delegated. In some well-developed decentralized systems, even financing is delegated to the provincial level.

3.2 Institutional Support

Several key factors contribute to successful decentralization and therefore to successful community management (Edwards et al. 1992).

First, it is important that the intermediate level of government have an organizational unit specializing in water and sanitation. Often, countries decide to delegate responsibility for most aspects of water and sanitation to a state or provincial level without developing a capacity at that level. Community management requires sustained support and nurturing over time, and without a local government structure capable of providing that support, community management is less likely to be successful.

Successful and effective community management will require support from government and/or other institutions. Both hygiene education and community management have tended to suffer from predetermined notions of what they include. For example, community management was once considered to be excellent if funds were collected on a regular basis. Hygiene education frequently tends to be thought of in terms of the numbers of latrines constructed. Such mechanistic criteria have tended to remove any responsibility from government institutions and to place it, instead, upon the issue of community "compliance or noncompliance."

The provision of long-term support to communities requires above all a thorough understanding of how these communities define themselves, use their resources to survive, govern or manage themselves, and define illness and health and the reasons for them. Project sustainability is not aided by the setting up and training of community committees that are neither representative of the people in these communities nor of the form of governing that exists within these contexts. Similarly, latrine construction in Moslem communities that does not allow for water to be used in cleansing, or does not take into consideration other modes of cleansing acceptable and practiced in those communities, will be far from adequate in improving the community's health status.

Frequently, government agencies and those responsible for community management have no basic understanding of what constitutes genuine community interests or concerns and how to

structure changes that are sustainable over the long term. Usually, this is because the capacity to carry out the kind of investigative work that needs to precede any form of programming does not exist in institutions responsible for delivering water and sanitation.

Countries that decentralize must be willing to devote resources to developing a capacity for community liaison. In Tunisia, for example, the regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture have a unit responsible for rural water supply, giving the central government a clear organizational unit to which it can provide support to strengthen its ability to work with communities.

A second key factor, again involving the intermediate level, is the coordination it maintains with the other organizations engaged in the water sector at that level: government ministries such as housing, finance, health, and social affairs as well as nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. To the extent that the water and sanitation sector decentralizes in a way that parallels other sectors, coordination and planning at the provincial level are likely to be more effective (Edwards et al. 1992). If the decentralized system is fundamentally different from the water sector, that coordination will be difficult. Chile, for example, has decentralized its water and sanitation sector into 12 regions, a structure which at present parallels no other sectors. It remains to be seen how this will affect coordination with other organizations at the regional level.

Finally, there must be a careful definition of roles and responsibilities between the central government and the provincial levels. Decisions need to be made about who will be responsible for planning, financing, design, construction, operations and maintenance, training, setting norms and standards, and setting and enforcing regulations. While some of these responsibilities clearly should remain with the central government, some of them must be transferred to a lower level of government if decentralization and community management are to occur. At a minimum, O&M responsibility should be delegated to a lower level of government, as it is very difficult for central government agencies to carry out operations and maintenance successfully unless the country is very small.

3.3 Number of Agencies Involved

A final sectoral-level issue is the number of agencies involved in rural water supply and sanitation (Edwards et al. 1992). Whenever there are a number of agencies with major responsibility for rural water and sanitation, coordination becomes more difficult. Having one agency responsible for community promotion, another for hygiene education, and perhaps several for design and construction will inevitably complicate the picture; communities must then deal with four or five agencies, which may not always deliver the same messages. Thus, limiting the number of players and strengthening their capabilities to cover a range of skills required for successful WS&S programs may be more conducive to community management.

Chapter 4

OPERATIONAL STEPS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

National and central institutions are beginning to recognize that, if community management is to achieve its promises, long-term nurturing and support will be needed. Rural water supply and sanitation systems have costs and responsibilities that must be met, whether the systems are operated by local or central authorities. Needs relating to staff training and retraining, fuel availability, spare parts, and more complex operations and maintenance all require the action of central authorities as well as communities. These and many more issues are signalling to authorities the gaps in their support of community management and also their need to recognize that the concept of decentralization encompasses more than the shifting of central government responsibilities to communities. This chapter will detail the operational steps involved in developing a large-scale community management program.

4.1 Encouraging Donor Collaboration

Donor collaboration is especially important in the area of community management. If one donor promotes community management while another does not, the government will be less likely to develop the policies and structures necessary to institutionalize community management. Unfortunately, such collaboration has often been lacking in rural and peri-urban water and sanitation projects. Through meetings, frequent communication, and review of follow-on project proposals, however, donors can cooperate more effectively and avoid promoting policies that are at odds with each other.

Recent requests from USAID missions indicate a changing trend in the operations of a number of rural water projects, promoting, above all, collaboration with other donor agencies in formulating a common approach to community management. In Tunisia, for example, a USAID-funded rural water project is drawing to a close; at the request of the Tunisian government, USAID is helping the government develop a strategy for institutionalizing water users associations throughout the country. *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)*, the German development bank, is a close partner in the evolution of this strategy. This collaboration is important because whereas USAID emphasizes the project's capacity-building and institutional development aspects, KfW supports the construction of facilities and the provision of logistic support. Yet both donors are committed to institutionalizing community management and to mutually supporting each other's efforts.

Similarly, as USAID's water supply and sanitation project in Belize draws to a close, its traditional emphasis on providing water points is now shifting to developing institutional capability at the central and community levels. As the proposals for the WS&S activities of the

next donors (in this case UNICEF and CARE) are being formulated, USAID is participating in the proposal reviews and is also involving the two organizations in some of its proposed end-of-project activities. In this way important information and insights relating to community management are retained and passed to others.

4.2 Establishing a Legal and Policy Framework

One of the keys to a successful community management program is a supportive legal and policy framework that addresses the following types of issues:

- Division of responsibilities for operations and maintenance
- Water quality monitoring
- Legal status of the community water users associations
- Regulatory provisions to ensure that the community water users associations are carrying out their responsibilities
- Ownership of the physical assets
- Community responsibility for managing the system
- Consequences of failure to manage the system effectively

The most important point to stress here is the question of ownership of the physical assets. Community management generally tends to focus on operations, maintenance, and recovery of costs. If all these are done well, this tends to indicate responsibility. Responsibility, in turn, suggests a "sense of ownership." However, national institutions need to clearly understand that the physical assets must *legally* belong to communities if they are to assume responsibility for them.

A legal and policy framework provides an official basis for supporting community management. In Tunisia, for example, the existence of a law passed by the national assembly allows for a high degree of political support. As a result of this law, governors and district heads support the Ministry of Agriculture's efforts in promoting local water users associations. When a community refuses to contribute and goes to a governor's office for financial support to buy fuel and spare parts, the governors generally do not oblige and remind the communities of their obligations. For a governor to provide funds would undermine the Ministry of Agriculture's effort.

Legal status allows communities to collect money and even open bank accounts for management functions, activities rarely possible without laws or legal guidelines. The lack of such laws creates the legal impediments found in many countries that tie the hands of staff and organizations close to the communities.

It is possible to begin a national community management program by simply passing a national law, as occurred in Tunisia. Other countries such as Sri Lanka are taking a slower route, evolving a legal framework over time. There is no "right" answer. What is important is that eventually a legal and policy framework exists that provides the necessary guidance to the implementing institutions. This framework should be flexible enough to allow revision from time to time, as lessons are learned about community management.

4.3 Defining and Clarifying Key Functions

Community-managed WS&S projects call for the integration of a number of components, each of these a skill area that is often the specialization of a different ministry. Thus, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities becomes an issue of critical importance.

4.3.1 Operations and Maintenance

The sustainability of the improved systems depends on the degree to which communities and supporting agencies can provide regular preventive maintenance and corrective maintenance when needed. Thus, operations and maintenance becomes one of the most important areas of community management. Such issues as who controls the spare parts, how the parts are obtained, and how technicians at different levels of government and the community will be trained make operations and maintenance as much an institutional as a technical consideration.

Communities on their own cannot perform all O&M functions. Therefore, when a project focuses on community management, it is important to know how much the community must do, who in the community can provide those services, and what type of training they will need. The central government, for its part, will need to ensure that training and tools are provided and that spare parts are available at convenient locations.

4.3.2 Health and Hygiene

It is now well recognized that improved facilities alone will not bring about the anticipated health benefits of WS&S projects. Hygiene education programs must accompany these facilities not only to help community people develop an understanding of the benefits to them from the improved facilities, but also to ensure, as a result, that people properly operate and maintain the improved facilities.

Given that health and hygiene programs are a critical component, the question of how they will be conducted and by whom continues to pose a serious sectoral problem. Although ministries of public health are viewed as the most logical group to implement this component, they are often weaker ministries with small budgets and staff that have gained seniority more from tenure than from innovative attitudes. Almost always a ministry of health will enjoy fewer resources than the ministries responsible for infrastructure construction.

Water project donors have approached this problem in various ways: some donors place water projects directly within the ministries of health, thereby contributing to the institutional strengthening of that ministry. Other projects have developed a hygiene education unit within the primary ministry responsible for infrastructure development. No matter what arrangement evolves, it is imperative that such an arrangement be developed during a dialogue that involves all the parties and ministries concerned. If the responsibility for hygiene education lies with a different ministry from the one responsible for construction, the two ministries must coordinate their efforts so that they provide an integrated package of assistance to the communities.

4.3.3 Monitoring and Support

The success of community WS&S projects depends on the training provided at the various levels and on the monitoring and support provided to those implementing the project. As outlined in *Tech Pack* (Yacoob and Roark 1990), a continual process of training in monitoring and support provides an experiential framework that has at its heart a philosophy of learning by doing, reviewing, and redoing. Such an approach helps extension agents stay responsive to changing conditions in the community. Although the concepts of community participation and management are similar, they are interpreted and implemented differently in each village.

Support from a regional staff is very important, to provide the continued context for training based on the needs identified at the community level by the extension agents. Where the programmatic approach is based on a process of learning rather than on a series of interventions, monitoring and support must be clearly centered on the community and the extension agents.

4.4 Managing Financing and Cost Recovery

A great deal of confusion exists among donors, implementing agencies, governments, and communities about what is expected from cost recovery. Generally, community WS&S projects anticipate that at a minimum all communities can pay for O&M costs. Unfortunately, the differing costs associated with each type of system and the various alternatives available to community people are not always discussed with them in enough detail. As a result, community people often believe that the only payment is the initial one made to open the fund and acquire the system.

Increasingly, however, donors and governments are viewing sustainability as a measure of how well communities recover costs. In such a climate, it is important to understand who is paying for what. Under many donor-operated programs, such inputs as pipes, cement, fittings, and skilled labor not found in the communities are provided by the donor, while the community provides the bulk of the labor. Under a policy of cost recovery, however, all labor and tangible inputs are to be provided by the communities, while the donor/implementing agency provides the technical expertise.

Most communities finance water systems through their equity, which includes available cash, donated labor, and materials within the community. Whatever portion of the total costs the community does not have on hand must come either from a loan that must be repaid (debt), or from a donor or government grant. Under some cost-recovery options, communities must assume debt to pay for purchased inputs such as materials and expert labor the communities cannot provide, because these are not part of the grant given to a community. Poor communities especially (which tend to characterize most areas implementing a community water supply) should not secure debt to substitute for equity they can provide. To ensure sustainability, it is important to consider financing options that appropriately combine community equity, debt, and grant to make up the total cost of the improved facilities.

The issue of how this mix of financing options can best be implemented within a cost-recovery strategy is very important: can communities actually pay for the up-front purchased inputs of their water system, even when they are willing to do so? One point of view holds that most communities are too poor to pay. The question then arises of how communities who are unable to pay will receive potable water. Another point of view assumes that most communities can pay if motivated to do so. Will they receive water if they are unwilling or unable to meet the policy of the implementing agency? Does it then become the role of the government/donor or implementing agency to help communities raise the funds necessary for financing a water system?

Some NGOs have experimented with setting up small community businesses to support the improved facilities, although the results of such efforts are still inconclusive. Be the activity a business or an improved water system, it will still need the implementing agency staff and resources to get started. Furthermore, when the implementing agency enters the community, it does so ostensibly because the community has identified water as a need. How will community people maintain their trust if the business appears to have become the priority, with the improved water shifted to the back-burner?

Regardless of the form that the cost-recovery strategy takes, clearly it cannot succeed without the backing and support of institutions with resources beyond those of the community.

4.5 Developing a Financial Management System

Two major tasks of a community water users association are to collect and manage funds. Because of the sensitivity surrounding the control of community funds, a community management program needs to develop a financial management system that provides for local control over the funds and a measure of accountability. Having legal status will generally allow a community association the right to open a bank account, which will permit access to the funds.

The financial management system needs certain characteristics: first of all, it must be simple, as any system that is too complicated will not work. Second, the system must be transparent enough that community members can determine if the funds have been well accounted for. Third, the system should allow for the responsible government agency to monitor the proper use of the funds. This right to monitor does not imply the right to control the funds but does imply the right to be informed and to intervene if necessary. Finally, the system should be flexible so that it can be modified if it is not working. The design of a financial management system is one of the responsibilities of the national government.

4.6 Determining Staffing and Organizational Needs

One of the most difficult challenges governments face in institutionalizing community management is staffing. Experience has shown that the entire community participation process is a labor-intensive activity that requires a fairly high ratio of staff to communities, since intensive contact must take place not only during the project design and implementation stages but also during the follow-up period. Yet most developing country governments are under increasing pressure to keep people off the public payroll. This situation generally creates a serious shortage of staff to carry out community participation activities, including the training and support that go into a community's management efforts.

Added to the problem of staffing is the fact that many technical ministries have no labor category of extension personnel and must retrain technical staff to work in community participation. This shifting can be successful if the government ministry creates a career track and offers incentives to attract good people. If these incentives are missing, however, the staff metamorphosis may be incomplete.

District-level extension agents will require some support from a small but competent staff at the central level, who are generally responsible for the following functions:

- Organizing and providing training to regional-level staff
- Monitoring progress in each region to determine what assistance is needed

- Coordinating activities with other concerned ministries
- Organizing national-level awareness programs
- Providing technical assistance to regions
- Providing guidance on policy-related issues
- Providing financing for activities of national interest

Addressing staffing issues—both number and type of staff needed—and dealing with the organizational changes required to attract and retain them is a critical step that governments can take to institutionalize community management. Although it is a difficult step in an era of limited resources, it must be taken because without the right staff, community management cannot be successful.

4.7 Determining Training Needs

In most situations, extension agents will need training. For one thing, staff reassigned from technical to community development roles require retraining, and new and career extensionists often lack the skills needed to work effectively with communities. In some countries, the formal educational system offers a post-secondary program in community development, but many of these programs are theoretical in nature and do not adequately prepare the graduate to work directly with communities.

To bridge this gap, community participation programs should offer skill-based training, probably in the form of short (one- to two-week) participatory workshops. WASH has developed a four-week training program for extension-level staff that can be delivered in two-week workshops or in four one-week workshops. When the training is divided in such a way, the participants can get some real experience between the workshops and can also apply what they have learned, thus making their training more relevant. Tunisia has carried out a two-week retraining of technicians, to be followed by a short refresher training in about a year.

A variety of training needs must be considered: in addition to community development agents, hygiene educators must be trained and also technicians to train village caretakers. In countries where the rural water supply technology is simple (a capped spring, perhaps), one person may be responsible for all three functions—community organization, hygiene education, and caretaker training. In countries with more-sophisticated technology (such as deep-well pumps), the functions may be divided among several people. The number of ministries involved also affects training needs; if two or more ministries are involved and all have a specialized role in the community participation process, training will have to address each of these needs separately.

An approach used successfully in Zaire was to create a national training team for rural water supply and sanitation. Represented on the team of 12 trainers are technicians, community development agents, and health educators, all of whom plan and deliver workshops in their areas of specialty.

Training is one of the critical steps in institutionalizing community management. Developing a national capacity and a training delivery system to conduct effective training is clearly one of the appropriate roles of the central government.

4.8 Determining Logistical Support Needs

Any donor will attest to the vehicle wasteland surrounding a project area (including the backyards of former project counterparts). As past projects were winding down, many donors realized that vehicles provided as part of a project were not always helpful to project activities. Gasoline, drivers, and maintenance facilities and crews are frequently beyond the means of the government; thus, during and after WS&S projects, logistical support often becomes a burden for governments.

Many donors have now curtailed the provision of logistic support, frequently leaving this issue for the governments to work out. Yet, travelling to the communities, spending time in their midst to carry out training, and conducting an ongoing dialogue that forms the very basis for a long-term partnership between communities and governments are all activities that cannot take place without access to transportation. One frequently hears the complaint from field staff that they cannot do their work because of severe logistical restrictions placed upon them by supervisors.

Obviously, there is no escaping the fact that for community management to take place, logistical support, especially transport, needs to be factored into the costs, preferably as early as possible in the project. In Tunisia, for example, where other donors besides USAID are players in the sector, KfW provides the logistics and support and USAID provides technical support in the form of community-management training.

Regardless of the arrangement worked out, logistical support is a critical aspect of extension; as such, how it will be done, what it will cost, and what it will entail all need to be considered at the very beginning.

4.9 Creating Awareness and Demand for Community Management

While the issue of community management remains in the forefront, there is frequently a great deal of support for it from everyone. When the project ends, however, there is always a

danger that the issues of community management will quickly fade into the background. A sector that is involved in the institutionalization of community management simply cannot allow this to happen and must develop an appropriate social marketing strategy as part of the community process. Such a strategy will need to reach all those involved in supporting and implementing a community management strategy—politicians, government, and communities.

This strategy will require different approaches for each of the target groups: community people, for example, will benefit from posters and frequent radio spots, although at this level a social marketing strategy cannot substitute for community training. For target groups such as politicians and high-level government officials, a social marketing strategy will need to include journal articles and press and radio interviews.

4.10 Developing a Management Information System

In order to monitor the overall progress of a national community management program, a management information system needs to be developed. Without such a system, decisions will be made in the absence of information. The system needs to operate on at least two levels: the regional or district office needs to track what is happening in the communities and the national office needs to track what is happening in the regions.

Although the specific informational needs would vary, the following are examples of the types of information likely to be useful:

Regional Level

- **Percentage of the population who are members of the water users association**
- **Amount of money collected and spent**
- **Operation and maintenance costs**
- **Number of hours of pump operation**
- **Amount of fuel purchased**

National Level

- **Percentage of water points that are managed by water user associations**

- Amount of money each region spends to support community water users associations
- Amount of money saved at the regional level in supporting water systems

To determine the informational needs, several steps are recommended. First, the different users should be identified and their particular informational needs determined. This will allow performance indicators to be established and data-collection forms to be developed. Once this occurs, ways to collect the information should be determined, and training provided in collection and analysis of the data.

A management information system will ultimately allow management indicators to be established that show progress and identify areas for improvement.

4.11 Documenting a Process for Working with Communities

The concept of community management, its implementation, and its institutionalization are still relatively new. Because each project, each context, and each approach are unique experiences, their documentation and the lessons learned from each should not be lost.

One way to address this need is through a procedure called process documentation, which had its origin in the Philippines (Veneration 1989). Following some community participation experiences in two irrigation pilot sites, a workshop was convened to assess the various approaches used. As a result of this workshop, a system—later called process documentation—evolved to help develop a research methodology that would capture the experiences of the different sites, yet also apply to future project implementation processes. This procedure calls upon social scientists and trained observers to provide detailed information on village-level project implementation. Individuals and groups involved in the project then analyze the data to extract lessons to use with a broader-scale intervention.

This type of documentation requires a systematic account of the activities and concerns of the users and project/government personnel. Such documentation is done through meetings and also through observation of project-specific activities. Interviews are needed to clarify how activities were conducted; for example, when the decision is made to form a committee, one might document the specific steps used by the extension agent and the community's response to each of these steps.

The point of this documentation process is to assess the implications for the establishment of long-term community management capability and behaviors. Therefore, the data could be arranged in a way that groups project activities according to each step of the community

management process (see *Tech Pack* for such a list). The narrative would be accompanied by a description of the key problems and issues that emerged from these activities.

What might eventually materialize are two categories of information. The first might be the existing social science knowledge on the characteristics of an effective water users association, namely, its broad representation, its tenure, its decision-making powers, and so on; the second category might be the objectives, policies, and procedures that are the underpinnings of the community's management system. The concepts and issues revealed would fall into two distinct groups: one comprising those relevant to the participation of users in establishing their own management procedures and to the development of the necessary groups, the other those concerning the field procedures and institutional practices for carrying out participatory community-based approaches.

4.12 Conclusion

Gilbert (1987) likened community management to a "chameleon," i.e., it looks different in different settings. Clearly, it is a very sensible notion to involve people in their own affairs and provide them with the skills required to carry them out successfully. If, however, donors, implementing agencies, and national governments are serious about promoting community management, they must consider how to provide enough support for it to survive. It is likely that donors will have to be the main advocates of the institutional development needed to sustain community management. At the same time, such donors will have to recognize that they may need to take a much longer view of project sustainability than is currently in fashion.

The central and regional levels of government each have an important role to play in a national community management program. Yet both roles are fairly distinct. At the central level, one agency should have the lead responsibility for the national community management program. This agency should be responsible for coordinating the activities of other agencies involved in the effort, setting direction, organizing national-level training, providing technical assistance to regions, monitoring overall progress, and taking the lead in making others aware of the importance of community management. Most of the implementation responsibility, however, should actually occur at the regional or district level. The regional office should assist in organizing the community committee or association, provide community-level training, regularly monitor the performance of the associations, and trouble-shoot when necessary. Regional-level activities could also be provided by NGOs. It is important that the central and regional or district levels clearly define their roles and responsibilities for a successful program.

The successes of NGO-implemented community management projects in specific geographic areas are important, as they can provide the lessons for national policy. However, national policy issues include far wider elements. Thus, a much broader approach is required, addressing policy, law, and interministerial (horizontal) relations as well as vertical expectations and dynamics. Private/public-sector issues are also key to sector management.

If sustainability is the major objective of donor assistance, then clearly an attempt to address long-term issues of community management is necessary. There are basic questions in providing water and sanitation services to the poor. Costs and responsibilities must be met—either by local communities or central authorities. Needs relating to legal standing of communities to collect and manage funds, staff training and retraining, availability of fuel and spare parts, and more complex operations and maintenance—all require the action and support of central authorities. The resolution of these issues and others are signalling to authorities that the concept of decentralization encompasses far more than simply assigning or shifting central government responsibilities to communities.

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